



## ***TASK FORCE LIBERTY*** ***Press Release***

*Headquarters, 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division*  
*Tikrit, Iraq (FOB Danger)*  
*APO AE 09308*  
*Civilian: 703-621-3944*  
*E-mail: Fortysecond.ID.PAO@us.army.mil*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 14, 2005

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq.** The first full month of operations has seen Task Force Liberty Soldiers achieve their rhythm of security and stability operations in North-Central Iraq. Soldiers continue to train and assist Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and work with Iraqi government and community leaders to grow all aspects of their country's capabilities, from civic functions to the availability of medical treatment for Iraqis. These efforts are yielding the windfall that is the goal of Operation Iraqi Freedom – a democratic Iraq, with the vigorous engagement by Iraqi citizens in the progress and life of their nation.

This engagement is shown by Iraqis' cooperation with ISF and Task Force Liberty Soldiers. Iraqis routinely lead security forces to unexploded ordnance (UXO) sites or provide accurate and timely tips about Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) and weapons caches. These tips spiked in March, resulting in the capture of insurgents and the destruction of tons of UXOs, improvised explosive device materials and insurgent weaponry.

The recognition by Iraqis that ISF and Coalition Forces' success is integral to their safety and national identity is also evident in Iraqis' public dialogue about terrorism. Iraqis now see terrorism as a personal threat, and are using forums afforded by their emerging democracy to bring it out in the open and address it aggressively.

### **Breaking the Cycle of Violence**

In the last two weeks, operations in the Task Force Liberty area resulted in an estimated 441 Anti-Iraqi forces detained, four killed and 11 wounded. Significant ammunition seized includes 1,198 includes rocket, mortar, and artillery rounds, 75 hand grenades and 22 cases of explosives. Major equipment captured included two heavy machine guns, one 14mm anti-aircraft gun, one four-barrel anti-aircraft gun, two rocket

---



launchers, 564 anti-personnel mines, six anti-tank mines, 848 small arms, 71 rocket propelled grenade (RPG) launchers with 29 rounds, 200 RPG boosters, and one laser range finder. Soldiers of the 203rd Iraqi Army Battalion cleared a sprawling area of UXOs known locally as 'UXO Field' March 5.

Within the Division's area of responsibility, 31 improvised explosive devices were discovered prior to detonation, preventing the needless loss of life at the hands of Anti-Iraqi forces.

### **Iraq Citizens Step Forward**

An Iraqi citizen's tip helped Iraqi Police disarm two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Buhriz, March 9. Iraqi Police explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel responded within minutes to an anonymous phone call to the Iraqi Joint Coordination Center (JCC).

In Arteka, Iraqi children have been leading soldiers to UXOs, so Coalition Forces are distributing fliers that warn children not to touch them. The fliers also teach Iraqis how to inform ISF and Coalition Forces about UXOs, and offer cash rewards for UXO and weapons cache information.

Religious leaders in Uroba coordinated local hiring to jump-start the construction of a medical clinic hampered by neighborhood discontent and initiated a community clean-up campaign. The chief of police in Taza recently asked religious leaders to assist in the capture of terrorists who have been attacking the city with mortars and rockets.

### **Iraqi Government Processes Continue**

On March 8, the first democratically elected Kirkuk Provincial Council fulfilled their promise to govern fairly across the region's ethnic, religious, and political diversity by selecting a multi-ethnic committee from its members to address administration tasks until a council chief is chosen.

Iraqi government agencies and Coalition Forces are supporting ISF and first responders with training, healthcare and benefits. The 205th Iraqi Army Battalion practiced assault maneuvers recently. Coordinated by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team's

---



1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, the training was a rare moment for the 205th Iraqi Army Battalion, which has been in action for the past two months and has captured dozens of insurgents and several weapon caches. Airmen of the 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron trained Iraqi firefighters how to administer CPR, check vital signs and evacuate casualties Feb. 24 to 25. The Iraqi government increased oil pipeline security by activating the 2nd Oil Pipeline Security Battalion (OSB). The battalion trains with the 1st Battalion, 163rd Infantry, and learned rifle marksmanship March 2.

In Baqubah, Coalition Forces and Iraqi medical personnel assessed disabled Iraqi soldiers March 3 to determine their eligibility for medical retirement under the auspices of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. In Balad, the Iraqi Army recently paid the families of two fallen Iraqi Army soldiers \$2,500 in death benefits. The payments, available to all families of Iraqi soldiers, are designed to help with the grief and hardship that follow from the loss of family members.

### **Iraqi Economic Growth Continues**

The Kirkuk Real Estate Bank expanded its ability to process business and home loans with the opening of the its newly renovated downtown office building. On March 6, the bank manager briefed 116th Brigade Combat Team finance personnel about bank management processes and challenges. The meeting is expected to further spur efforts to help banks operate more independently.

The Riyadh granary's chief of farmers and troops of 1st Battalion, 163rd Infantry, assessed the Riyadh granary for repairs March 3. The chief of farmers is expected to coordinate with Coalition Forces to fix and replace missing components so the granary can process locally-grown grain.

**1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Raider).** Raider Soldiers are hard at work training different types of ISF for a variety of missions to help clean up the city streets of Iraq.

The 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor, conducted Operation City Market with Ministry of Interior (MOI) commandos in Samarra March 3 to 13. MOI commandos are a special paramilitary team with a special weapons and tactics (SWAT) approach to the job of

---



policing up insurgents in Samarra. The goal of the operation was to rid Samarra of Anti-Iraqi Forces.

The operation netted about 138 detainees, including known IED makers and associates of known high value targets. No actual high-value targets were arrested during the operation, but their associates may lead MOI commandos to their arrests. Foreign Wahhabi fighters were also arrested.

Numerous small arms and bomb making materials were also seized during the operation. Soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor were present during the operation for support and observation.

The Public Order Battalion (POB), trained by Coalition Forces, conducted presence patrols on the outskirts and inside the city of Samarra. The POB is basically a police battalion, but have gone through extra training to deal with insurgents. Officers of the POB go through police and infantry training before they are sent to their prospective destinations.

During the operation, the Iraqi POB conducted humanitarian missions and visited Samarra residents.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Sledgehammer).** On March 6, with the Help of Iraqi Army soldiers from Kan'an, Task Force Liberty Soldiers of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 34<sup>th</sup> Armor conducted a primary village assessment of Farras. The citizens in the village were eager to speak to the Task Force Liberty Soldiers. They were open and very cooperative. It was determined that the initial engagement in Farras was so effective that a second assessment would further enhance the relationship between Coalition Forces and the citizens of the town. The soldiers also stopped by to see the villagers working at the local car wash, who gave a fresh cleaning to the Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces vehicles.

In downtown Baqubah, the Civil Military Operations Center supported youth and sports programs, fulfilling a written request for five soccer balls. Some of the team members have siblings that attend classes at the Civil Military Operations Center.

On March 10th, medics from the Company C, 203rd Forward Support Battalion celebrated the third birthday of Qais Abbas, a seriously ill Iraqi boy from the Baqubah

---



area. The boy has been under the care of Dr. Matthew Carter, a pediatrician from Martin Army Community Hospital who is attached to the 203rd Forward Support Battalion. The boy was hospitalized in Baqubah for 75 days and Iraqi doctors were not able to diagnose his condition. The parents first brought Qais to the aid station when his condition did not improve. The medical team referred him to the Teal Aid Station so that he could be treated by a pediatrician. Although the cause of Abbas' medical condition remains a mystery, Dr. Carter remains hopeful that the child can be diagnosed and treated. The 203rd Forward Support Battalion is assisting the local family find a diagnosis and cure for their sick child.

Meanwhile, The Khan Bani Sa'ad Medical Clinic continues to provide health care to its citizens. As the region becomes more secure, supplies are arriving and the clinic is able to increase its ability to provide improving medical care for the citizens.

**116<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Warrior).** During the first weeks of March, the 116th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) helped Iraqi security, economic, government and communications efforts in north-central Iraq move forward. The 116th continues to support local government, tribal and religious leaders in this ethnically-diverse area as they develop plans for their country's progress.

The last two weeks have seen significant progress in the areas of training and operations of Iraqi security forces in the region. Units of the 116th BCT supported training and certification of Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police Services (IPS) units. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 148<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery helped train 16th Iraqi Army Brigade soldiers on squad-level tasks, as well as individual skills required for certification.

Quality training is translating to real-world results as IPS and Iraqi Army units stop insurgent attacks and net detainees. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 116<sup>th</sup> Armor and IPS thwarted a rocket attack and seized insurgent weapons in a joint operation. The battalion teamed up with 14th Iraqi Army Brigade soldiers in a raid that netted six of eight insurgents sought. One was the number ten on the division's most wanted list of known terrorists, wanted for planting explosive devices at polling sites before the January 30 elections.

---



Economic advances in the 116th BCT's sector are seen in area projects. Construction and repairs to schools, roads, transportation systems, water systems, banks and clinics were all reported in the last two weeks. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, reports a new school opening in Al Abassia and a school being built in Sidr village. They also report progress in assessing the needs of the hospital and repairing the roads in Hawijah. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 116<sup>th</sup> Armor reported construction on a local clinic and assisting IPS in delivering school supplies donated by American citizens to the Shorja School for Girls. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 148<sup>th</sup> helped deliver supplies to five schools in the Darbandikhan district and conducted an Iraqi Displaced Person (IDP) Camp assessment. The 358th Civil Affairs Battalion reports that Iraqis met in Kirkuk to discuss economic development. The 358th has also been involved in assessments of hospitals, Iraqi displaced person IDP camps, and schools.

Leadership of the 116th BCT continues to place special emphasis on media relations in order to inform the local populace of relevant issues. Newly elected members of the Kirkuk Provincial Council held a press conference on February 28 to answer questions and since then, 11 of the 41 members have also appeared on the Iraqi Media Network talk show to field constituent questions.

**278<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team (The Volunteers).** The Soldiers of the 278<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team (RCT) actively engage freedom and democracy for the Iraqi people, and continue to improve the security and living conditions in Iraq.

On February 28, soldiers from Company B, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 128th Infantry delivered approximately 80 pairs of donated shoes to children in Sayyid Alan Village. With poor sanitation in the village, shoes for children will reduce cuts and infections commonly treated there.

As of March 1, the Regimental Provost Marshall's Office, in conjunction with Team Brave, 1st Squadron, 278<sup>th</sup> RCT, has issued 1,700 sets of body armor, 1,000 Glock tactical holsters, 500 winter coats, 192 sets of binoculars, 15,000 rounds of 9mm ammunition and 45,600 rounds of ammunition to the Department of Border Enforcement at Qazania, in the Diyala Province of Iraq.

---



On March 2, Soldiers of the 2nd Squadron, 278th RCT, conducted a patrol into Sulayman Bak to capture suspected AIF personnel. Two of the three suspects were detained and are being questioned. During the raid and subsequent search of the premises, the team found IED making material as well as two mortar rounds. The rounds were determined to be unsafe to move and were destroyed by EOD. No Peacemakers were injured and no equipment was damaged during this raid.

Also on March 2, the medical team from 1st Squadron, 278th RCT conducted medical assessments in Balad Ruz. Lt. Col. Dees was able to treat approximately 25 patients, mostly children. Approximately 100 residents of Balad Ruz showed up for treatment at the Joint Coordination Center.

On March 6, Soldiers of the 206th Iraqi Army Battalion and L Troop, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 278th RCT conducted joint individual weapons qualification training. On the first day of training, L Troop Soldiers trained the Iraqi non-commissioned officers (NCOs). Then the Iraqi NCOs trained their respective squad members. Day two of the training was spent on Battle Position Cobra's firing range, where Iraqi soldiers ran the range with L Troop's assistance. Twenty members of 1st Platoon, Company D, 206th Iraqi Army Battalion were present for the instruction. All the Iraqi soldiers qualified with their AK-47 rifles. The "train-the-trainer" model worked very well, and more training is scheduled this week and in the weeks to follow.

**42<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Brigade (Eagle).** The 42<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Brigade Eagles is now re-constituted and fully operational under the 42nd Infantry Division, supporting all four BCTs. With elements assisting forces in the Mosul area, the Eagles soared high, flying over 2,200 hours in support of a various operations, including convoy security, reconnaissance, cordon and search, VIP escort and transport, and battlefield circulation.

The Flying Tigers out of Kentucky and the Horsemen from Fort Bragg have been invaluable in their support of the division and BCTs. Flying some 1,300 hours these past two weeks, 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 229th Attack Helicopter and 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 17th Cavalry provided security of numerous re-supply and personnel transport convoys as they moved through the division's area of responsibility. Highlights for this month include serving as

---





flying body guards for a congressional delegation which included New York's Senator Hillary Clinton and Arizona's Senator John McCain, and assisting in major operations in Samarra.

While the attack and cavalry units are the tip of the spear for aviation, the lift assets move personnel and material across the battlefield and ensure the division commander, his staff, and the ground commanders can see the battlefield. Lt. Col. Mark Preston and Lt. Col. Elizabeth Dreiling, commanders of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 150th Aviation and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 140th Aviation respectively, ensure their units are well aware of the importance of their mission. They've flown a combined total of 850 hours in the first half of March, transporting priority repair parts, Lt. Gen. Aziz of the Iraqi Army, 42nd Infantry Division Staff, and our division's Soldiers.

Without the soldiers of the 642nd Division Aviation Support Battalion, these missions wouldn't have happened. They fixed aircraft into all hours of the night and ran convoys across the supply routes to ensure parts and fuel reach their destinations so that aircraft can fly.

**Division Artillery (Thunder).** Division artillery (Divarty) received its combat patch in a ceremony at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Summerall on March 17. The Soldiers of the field artillery worked hard for this recognition. Some of the Soldiers have been in country since October 25, 2004.

Divarty is currently getting into a battle Rhythm which includes weekly ground-assault convoys to sustain operations. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 13<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery are refining their skills of force protection and on the Multiple Launch Rocket System. The 272<sup>nd</sup> Chemical Company is tasked with force protection and division defense to chemical or biological attack. Divarty is ensuring FOB Summerall's force protection measures and life support systems are operational.

**Division Engineers (Detonator).** Division Engineers worked on two fronts in the last two weeks, literally paving the way for convoy safety and creating a partnership with Iraqis using their own specialized engineer skill sets.

---





On March 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Company B, 983rd Engineer Battalion conducted a ground-assault convoy to repair a hole in the Samarra Bridge. The bridge had been the site of an IED attack, and the repair was necessary to prevent insurgents from using the hole for future IED attacks. Soldiers secured the bridge and completed the repair mission, estimated at two to three hours, in less than 45 minutes.

In the first week of March, Company B, 983rd Engineer Battalion, helped local Iraqis enhance their carpentry skills through improvement projects at Forward Operating Base Speicher. The Iraqi craftsmen worked with the engineers, building desks and constructing framing walls.

**Division Support Command (Muleskinner).** Division Support Command (DISCOM) continued to support Task Force Liberty's BCTs throughout classes of supply and expanded its mission by concentrating the development of support for the ISF.

This support included the Iraqi Army, Border Patrol, and Police. As the AIF shifts their focus toward these forces, it is critically important that the level of support increase to enable them to accomplish the mission and be self-reliant.

During this reporting period, the division materiel management center received over 80 tons of individual-soldier equipment for issue to these forces. This equipment was broken down by type and prepared for issue through the BCTs to the Iraqi forces that operated within the area of responsibility. In support of Operation City Market, the Iraqi Army was issued two million rounds of 7.62mm and 4,000 rounds of 9mm. Additionally, it is not uncommon for civilian-contractor trucks to pull in to FOB Speicher unannounced, laden with ammunition. Four million rounds were delivered by civilian S&P earlier this week. The DISCOM also supplied vehicles to the Iraqi Forces. They were issued water tankers, ambulances, and cargo trucks. These are necessary assets for the Iraqi Forces as they assume more responsibility.

The DISCOM continues to develop and implement missions, with the main support battalion (MSB) running daily convoys. The MSB was instrumental in executing the mission from FOB Speicher to retrieve vehicles from Camp Buehring. This mission took a week on the road for the MSB and was highly successful. After the transfer of

---



authority, DISCOM immediately began supporting the Iraqi Army, Border Enforcement, and Police with equipment that ranged from uniforms to weapons and vehicles. The 50<sup>th</sup> MSB unloaded 100 tons of equipment for issue to the Iraqi Police and armed forces.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division Support Command continues to prepare and transfer responsibilities to the Iraqi Army support units which will enable the Iraqis to sustain their own force.

In its humanitarian efforts, the 50<sup>th</sup> MSB visited two all-girls schools in the city of Tikrit, Iraq and donated education supplies and clothes for the children.

### **Conclusion**

Task Force Liberty continues to help provide a safe and secure Iraq. The upcoming weeks will bring the seating of the Iraqi Transitional Government and the beginnings of Iraq's new constitution.

We continue to work with the Iraqi Security Forces to neutralize the insurgency. We will continue to help train, coach and support the Iraqi Transitional Government and the Iraqi Security Forces so that they can improve the quality of life for their people. We believe in the future of Iraq. To our families, friends, employers and the American people, Task Force Liberty thanks you for your steadfast support and encouragement.

***Never Forget!***

**For more information on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty:**

**[www.42id.army.mil](http://www.42id.army.mil)**

---